

CASE STUDY 1

FROM EAPPI
REPORTS

Family separation

Tony's story

Tony is a builder. He says there is hardly a decorated pavement in Bethlehem that he hasn't built. Like many builders, he has an ancient white van. He is a Christian and comes from Beit Jala, a town next to Bethlehem in the West Bank.



The checkpoint between Israel and Bethlehem.



A split household

Tony is married with four children, but he isn't allowed to live with his wife, a teacher from Nazareth in Israel. Israeli law says that a Palestinian from the West Bank cannot live in Israel. The children are too young to need the ID card that the Israeli government requires of all adults, so they are free to travel. During the school term they live with their mother in Nazareth, and in the holidays they stay with their dad in Bethlehem. But soon they will be too old to be able to do this.

Tony has a lovely flat, built above his parents' home, with beds and toys for his children for their holidays, but he is really depressed because he is never able to see his wife. They can talk to each other on the phone but that is all.

The family has some land in a beautiful valley just outside Bethlehem. It belonged to his grandparents, and they built a house there in the 1930s. But the Israeli authorities have told Tony he can no longer own the land because the boundary has been changed and the valley is now in Israel.



Tony shows a photo of the family he is separated from. Photo: EAPPI/J.H

Israeli forces destroyed the house because it was built without permission. It was built before Israel existed so that was impossible. The Israeli soldiers also took away Tony's ID, with its permission to enter Israel. This is when the family had to live separately. But Tony refuses to accept the loss of his land. He avoids the soldiers who guard the entrance to the valley and grows flowers and vegetables on his land.